

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Abstract of the Disclosure has now been amended to correct the editorial defects noted by Examiner.

Figure 1 of the drawings has now been amended to extend the lead line and thereby overcome the error noted by the Examiner.

Claims 1-12 remain in this application. Claim 13 has been cancelled and the subject matter of that claim is incorporated into amended claim 1.

In the action under reply, all of applicant's claims were rejected for obviousness under Section 103 in view of Jensen 5,571,080 and Martz 5,656,167. Reconsideration of that rejection is respectfully requested for the following reasons:

The subject of this invention is a wound closure device. In the past, such devices have included non-stretchable adhesive strips that are secured to the skin across an incision to hold the cut edges of the incision in contact with each other long enough for the healing process to re-establish the bond between these cut edges.

This invention is an improved wound closure device that is more effective than the prior art tape closures. It has all the advantages of tape closures over sutures and staples, and has the further advantages that it is also a very effective wound dressing, serving the functions of absorbing wound exudate and protecting the wound from all external contamination, including microbes. These functions have never been provided before in an effective wound closure device.

It is submitted that the references relied upon by the Examiner disclose wound dressings but not wound closure devices. The Jensen patent discloses a surgical dressing, not a wound closure device. As noted by the Examiner, Jensen fails to teach a plurality of flexible but non-stretchable reinforcing members secured to and extending in spaced relation across a dressing so as to prevent stretching of the dressing in only those directions parallel

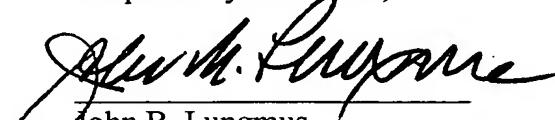
with the members while allowing stretching and contraction of the dressing in all other directions.

Martz is concerned with a moisture vapor permeable membrane that is reinforced to reduce problems of tearing by means of a nonwoven reinforcing matrix of filaments extending in a plurality of directions. While such reinforcement reduces stretching, it does not prevent it as seen, for example, in Figure 2. Further, the filaments extend in plural directions (see Figures 6 and 7), in contrast to applicant's wound closure device in which the members are arranged only in parallel with each other so that stretching may occur in every direction except directions parallel with such reinforcing members.

It is therefore submitted that applicant's invention is concerning with a different type of article--a wound closure device--and that the references relied upon by the Examiner do not disclose a device having the structural features called for in applicant's amended claims or suggest the important results achieved by such structural features.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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FIG. 1

*lead line
for W
extended*

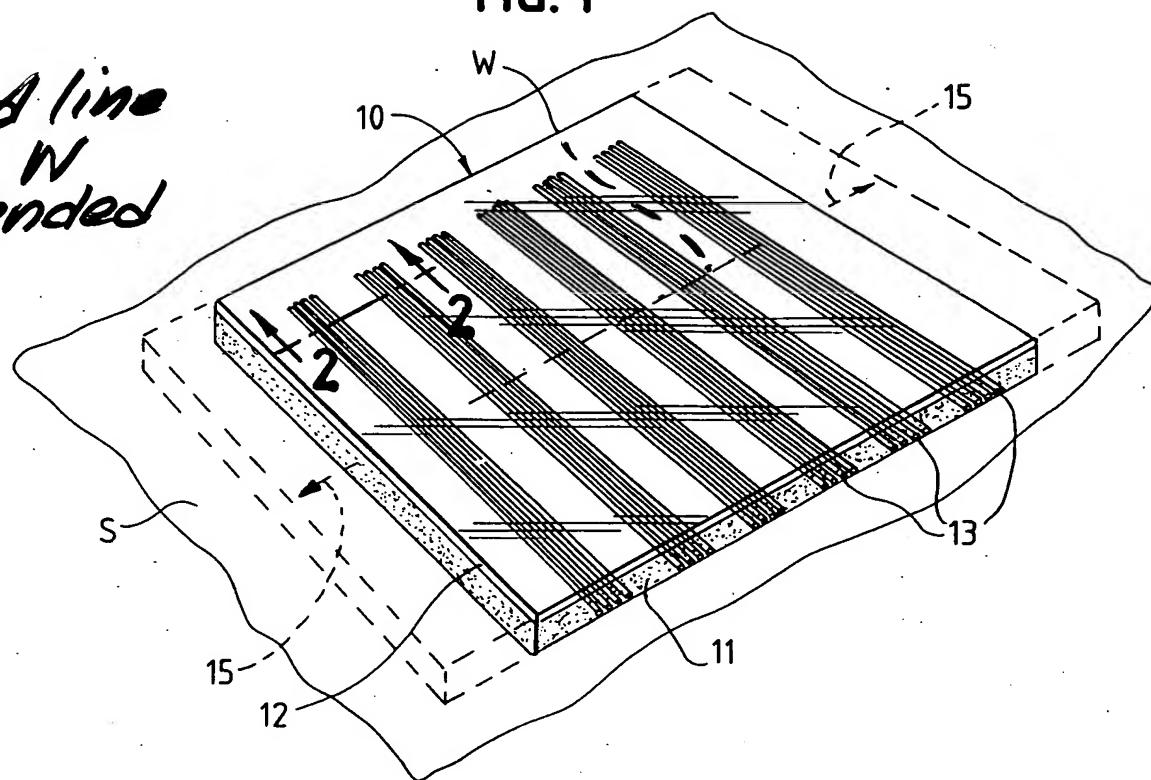


FIG. 2

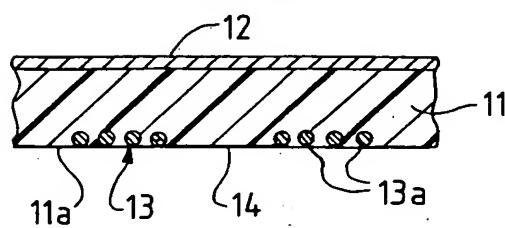


FIG. 4

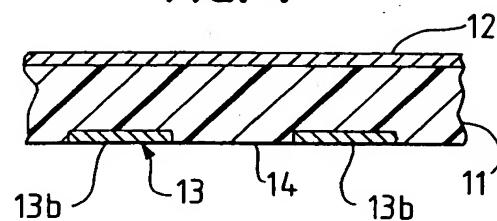


FIG. 3

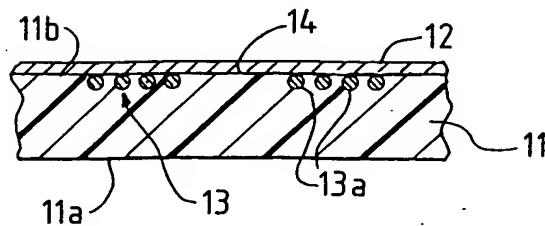


FIG. 5

